

Teacher Support Staff Superintendent Advisory  
4:00-5:00 p.m.  
Tuesday, Mar. 25, 2014  
Administration Building – 215 S. 6<sup>th</sup> Street West  
Room 24

Members: Adriel Shearer, Alex Apostle, Anthony Zook, Avis Chenoweth, Bradford Herron, Camille Barraclough, Carol MacIntyre, Cathleen Armstrong, Connie Pederson, Crista Anderson, Dave Burtch, Diane Anderson, Elizabeth McGrath, Hatton Littman, Janice Nugent, Karen Allen, Mary McAllister, Melanie Charlson, Melissa Lynn, Sarah Lee, Tricia Owens

Committee Members Present: Alex Apostle, Connie Pederson, Diane Anderson, Crista Anderson, Dave Burtch, Adriel Shearer, Karen Allen, Janice Nugent, Hatton Littman, Sarah Lee

Others present: Tracy Long, Mark Thane

Members Absent: Anthony Zook, Avis Chenoweth, Bradford Herron, Camille Barraclough, Carol MacIntyre, Cathleen Armstrong, Elizabeth McGrath, Mary McAllister, Melanie Charlson, Melissa Lynn, Tricia Owens

## NOTES

Dr. Alex Apostle opened the meeting at 4:02 p.m.

### **Search function on District website needs improvement** – Tracy Long (Adriel Shearer)

Adriel asked Tracy if she has used the website search function—Yes. Does it work all right for you? Yes. Tracy explained that in the beginning it was only giving you an address; now it pulls from the apps people create. [Janice Nugent arrived.] Adriel said you type something in and the name of the app that was used to edit the page that was created will be the first thing that comes up. Tracy: all your pages are based on apps. So you can have numerous apps on pages. Where we have difficulty is in getting people to name their apps: you will see a lot of flex editor. People are looking for something specific to that app. If you are looking for graduation, it will pull any app that has graduation in it. So if you have specific names on your app, it will help people. [Sarah Lee arrived.] Crista: it's not intuitive; they don't see it. She suggests you go to Google to MCPS teaching standards and search instead of using the district search. It is fast to go to the website and find your way to forms, but faster to go to Google and search. Adriel: a feature of Schoolwires—that may be where the problem is. Tracy: Schoolwires is working on new things all the time: now they are looking at mobile apps. Originally it just gave you a web address that was not a live link. It has evolved to where it is now. Crista puts tags on each item, so when they search classroom management and it is tagged, it will bring that up. Tracy: we are still working on educating staff and getting them to develop their websites. She has sent out an email trying to get a feel for who needs to be trained. Karen: would there be a place for a checklist that says what steps to take if you are trying to find something? Crista: the quick screen shot tutorials are helpful. Tracy uses screenshots for training—they can see their websites and arrows and where to go. Karen: do they understand the training they need, what the next right steps are? Tracy:

that's what we have sent out in the survey; we have had 48 responses so far. We are trying to get a feel for who needs basic training and who needs next steps. Karen reminded us that the fact that we are having trouble is a good sign: it means we are trying to use it more. Adriel: if he were a member of the public and put in robotics to search: it comes up home page flex editor app, then Missoula robotics team flex editor app. Tracy explained that when staff build their apps, they are not naming the apps—that is a matter of education we are trying to get out. Adriel: if I am a member of the public seeing this, it will be confusing and I won't be very impressed. Crista could not find policies by code word until she used Google. Karen: if we as staff members build them right, they will find them. How do we get people to do that? Tracy: that is training; it is part of the site directors' job. They don't have time. But if they have 5 minutes, they could cruise and see what things are on there. Karen: robotics is one she knows a tiny bit about. If someone said robotics needs to have a label, could we get that done by Friday? Yes. It was Chris's page that came up; they have not found Dave's page yet. Tracy: if you are on the district site it will pull everything; if you are on the Sentinel site it will pull just Sentinel information. Dave and Chris are meeting tomorrow; they will get it done. Crista suggested they could name it C.S. Porter robotics so people didn't have to dig and search. Dave: he suggests people go to his school website, which has a link to robotics and forms. Chris has done the same thing. A whole third party site, mrt3216, is our robotics site that is student driven; it is not in the district server; it is a GoDaddy site. Adriel: how many teachers are actively using their district site or actively using third party sites? Tracy: about 90% of teachers are using Schoolwires. A small percentage have outside links. That will change in August; it all needs to be housed on Schoolwires because there is a major archiving piece. If a parent or lawyer raises an issue and the teacher deletes a Google site, we can't defend it; if it is Schoolwires, we can. That's why all those emails have gone out instructing people to get those things moved. We want people to build their site within Schoolwires. Crista said she worries about those teachers who have put so much time and effort into building their own websites and having that devalued. Tracy: that's why it was a 2 year process. Adriel: did teachers have input into the sites? Crista: it was robust enough where you could embed a Google site or Livewire or something. Tracy: you can have those, but your own teacher site must be built within Schoolwires. Crista: the Schoolwires is a hub: you can link. Adriel asked if we can link to third party websites—Yes. But what you post as district has to be Schoolwires. Crista: or embedded. Weebly is what Adriel uses. Crista can show him how to embed it. It will still be archived. Sarah: more training for teachers? Yes. That's why the survey went out, to find out who needs the basic and who has had that and is ready to move on. Adriel asked about Google Apps for Education. Tracy: we won't be using the sites from Google, using it as an educational piece. Crista: it can still be embedded. It creates everything in Google; it is automatic, dynamic, easy, and fast, but it is embedded. Tracy: libraries are using that; they build a table and make it live. Crista talked about the link that says target. Adriel: if a teacher is tweeting updates through Twitter to students—Tracy: you have to be careful with Twitter; you have to worry about inappropriate contact with students. Crista suggested Twitter stream, just what you are sharing out, and you can embed it. It keeps it safe and clean. It all has to be embedded in Schoolwires. Dave asked about training. Tracy said it has happened this year already, and she will put more out following feedback. Karen: we are doing some Google apps on April 28. Could we run a training on that afternoon maybe specifically for high end users who spent the time and have been doing it for years, specifically for people who have these kind of questions? Crista is doing a different training that day, but someone else can. Adriel: that is the problem with our PIR, and the technologies: most are not mandatory, they are

flexible. Tracy agreed it has been hard to work within that frame. Adriel suggested it has to be mandatory. Karen tried to get it so the 8 hours were only technology. Crista: you can go into most any of our classrooms and take photos and put them on classroom blogs as long as it is not first names and last names together; but people don't realize. Tracy just sent the publishing guidelines out again; it specifically talks about grade levels and names, etc. Crista: it was right at the same time Q wasn't working and teachers were trying to do grades. Alex: do we need to put a team of people out into the schools to work with staff? Tracy: again it is the problem of people not having time. Sarah suggested a person who is the expert at each school. Crista: library media specialists would be good. Adriel: what we have had in place the last 2 years is having an expert in the building; it is not working. She is accessible, provides plenty of training, PIR, website, it is flexible PIR. It is a contract issue. When we are dealing with PIR days in September and April and not devoting that entire day to something high need, instead we are allowing free rein and responsive PIR to building needs—but this is a district need. 80% of this staff district wide are not appropriately trained for the technology solutions we are putting into place. Karen: you are making a very good point. Professional development is under her name—we are going to see about doing something different, collaborating with Hatton and the tech committee. We are working on levels of tech competence. Back to search function: Tracy will talk to Schoolwires some more and see what they can get in place. Diane said she goes out to libraries and sits with people as they are doing something, and they stumble across how to do it: it will look different for different people. Crista: buildings that have done some on local sites training are doing much better. Diane: they are working with people they know and feel safe with. Tracy: when people are building their pages, they have to name their apps appropriately. Tracy will do some education. Karen asked if Schoolwires could be set to not accept something that does not have a name—No. Alex: this is a district issue; it is a communication and professional development issue. He asked Karen to work with Hatton on this. Karen: if we used the September 20-something date of PIR for this, how would that be? Adriel: just do it. Don't ask. Tell the whole staff they have to rename apps appropriately; give them time to do that. It could be an early out. Dave: how many teachers do this work in the summer so it is ready for fall, so they would need the information before September? There was agreement that it would be many. Alex asks that Karen, Hatton, and Tracy look into this and come back soon: we will email and communicate with you; we will not wait for the next meeting. Thanks to Tracy. [Tracy left.]

**PLCs** – Because of commitments to several buildings, required meeting times for PLC's are very difficult to work in. They have added another meeting without taking something away. In other words, it either reduces student contact hours, added time after contract hours or during some teacher prep times. Not sure how to put this, but bottom line is when we embrace a new undertaking, something has to give a little; how do they intend on addressing this? –Karen Allen (Janice Nugent)

Janice: some of this may have been solved by time. She brought it up earlier: physical therapists and speech language pathologists serve multiple schools and were encouraged to be in a PLC in their schools; each school wanted them in PLCs, it was very difficult to make that work due to multiple assignments. Typically they picked one school and did that. The PLC work tended to be very good for the progress of the children in the school, but not focusing on their IEP kids. She thinks this has gotten worked through, but there are things to think about when people's areas of specialties are unique and they have 2 schools. Meetings for PLCs that are at 7:30 a.m. or 7:45 may be personally inconvenient to those folks, but they feel a subtle pressure to come to those at

that time. It seemed to be an issue. Janice thinks, regarding the role of the PLCs and the role of the specialists in the PLCs, that within the specialty group you might have a more beneficial PLC rather than participation in other PLCs. Some of the school psychologists felt pressure, because different grade level teachers wanted them at one PLC one week and another one another week. [Hatton arrived.] Karen: not every meeting is a PLC. She wants specialists to understand their points of view are very important for the kids other than those for whom they hold IEPs. She gets it when they say it doesn't affect their kids, but it does. The biggest thing about a PLC is you share results. When speech language pathologists get together they have a different conversation than one in a primary PLC might have. But their experience is extremely valuable to those who don't spend a lot of time with them all the time. She talked with Mark today: your day can flex: 7 to 3, 7:30 to 3:30 or 8 to 4. We would hope it would work the same way that specialists sometimes stay for IEP meetings, and those have comp time. The reality is we don't expect a specialist to be at a meeting. She understands, having had a principal tell her when she went to 4 schools a week, that when she was not there people didn't think she was working. Janice feels strongly that the specialists are giving a fairly large amount of time; there are so many students who need their specific services. Karen: it could be we decide where people can be most effective. It is hard when you are only one of you; but she thinks people value you. She will talk to Kathleen and Ginny some more and see what we can do.

We will discuss Employee Recognition while we wait for Mark.

#### **Employee recognition – Diane Anderson**

Diane passed out suggestions. She would like some feedback; she thinks we would not do much before fall. There is interest in having it be more localized; she thinks it would have more value, because you know people better. We need to still do something at district level: we have board meetings, committees; some say Custodians Day is good, others ask about positions that don't have a title. We have some folks who give us something when we go above and beyond—e.g. her shamrock. It trickles down and trickles up, just as we appreciate when people go the distance and say that they really appreciate something. Sometimes it is a time crunch, but the payback is really worth it. Diane gave an example of an outside person involved in district negotiations one year vs. the commitment of our administration making an investment in our community and recognizing who we are, getting down to one little extra thing and knowing that these folks care about our people. We will always have people who disagree with us. People do the best job they can. It is important for us to recognize that. We will revisit this: how it might look at sites and at the district level. Alex: are we sending anything out to schools in general, asking for their opinion? Not yet, but Diane handed out what she has drafted for the wiki and the MCPS newsletter. Alex: there is no question we are honoring our employees, recognizing employees in many different ways. It would be nice if we had an actual program so that we know how we will recognize employees. Reaching out like this is a good start. Diane has had 4 people say they are willing to serve on committee. We will make sure our work is thoughtful and deliberate, and worth their time. Karen: every school has a PAC—if unions suggest that part of the PAC's function should be this, she has had conversation about having support staff on the PACs. Alex: we could work through the PAC. Adriel brought up MBI. Diane gave the example of the superhero backpacks at Russell, a grassroots thing—people would load it up; it may look different at the high school. Karen: wellness—the idea of recognition and feedback goes with MBI. A good fit. Karen suggested talking to Carol Ewen about that; Diane agrees we could try

that. Alex: going through MBI makes sense. Diane said it has sustainability. Karen: it is about taking care of people.

**FERPA compliance:** Provide staff with definitive information – Mark Thane (Diane Anderson) Mark Thane passed out a handout. Each school handbook has reference to FERPA, and we as a school district have policy in that regard. The FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) prohibits us from releasing student information unless we have written authorization from the student over 18 or the parent, with some exceptions: e.g., directory information. Karen asked if parent names are directory information—no. Mark: parents can still opt out of directory info—we are required to offer that option, by statute, and they are required to notify us by September 15 to have that on record. Sticky areas: information can be disclosed to other school personnel if there is a legitimate educational reason for them to have access. We used to have a card file in the office with student records, which sat on the secretary's desk. We were told we were out of FERPA compliance because anyone could access it without written permission. It is now on Q. The question was raised some time ago in a school setting if a student has a significant medical condition, should you apprise the whole staff because they might be outside another teacher's door. Well, in a large school he might not know the student and make the connection, and secondly, has he had training to deal with it. Through the nursing program we have collected that information and treat with FERPA and HIPAA regulations. Parents often will authorize release of that information so that in playground situations they can identify students if there is a need. Even teachers who may not be engaged with that student's specific educational program should not have access to grades or attendance data because that is not directory information. The handout is what is often referenced as the Buckley Amendment. It was intended to give families the right to access information and make corrections necessary; it morphed by amendment into protections. There are cases in which parental rights are terminated and all student information is to be protected. This is from the federal register online. Karen: do we have support staff who believe they should have information they are not getting?—Yes. Karen: Mark was very clear about the responsibilities, but there is a bubble in which the people are working with the people and there is a need to know. Diane: it really falls down, for example, in library/media assistants: some kids are obviously autistic and need to be dealt with differently; you know some people are fragile, but you don't know how to deal with them. E.g. there was one student who could not be touched. It is possible that a real problem could be created for that child in particular. Specialists sometimes don't have enough information: at the high school level they don't know. When you ask, you are told according to FERPA or HIPAA you don't need to know. Mark: if there is an IEP team developing guidelines with a student, then the team should make sure that everyone who has contact with that individual through the day has access to the behavioral plan, educational plan, whatever. Diane: contact with media assistants happens during lunchtime. Are they better not knowing from a legal standard, to protect the district on that end? Mark: good question; the response is what is really in the best interest of the student. With wraparound services and the braided initiative, we will have many people coming together in support of that student. If they have a legitimate educational issue, they should be part of the plan. Connie: at Big Sky HS the accommodations are given to anyone who has contact with a student; it has proven invaluable. Janice: the IEP form requires a box to be filled out about how other people will be informed about this child. You click email or something else, and list the people. Karen asked Diane to meet with Kathleen and Ginny and her; as we review policies for next year, we will clarify that. Diane: the specialists are on the periphery, but we also have noon

duties, playground aides, etc. Mark: a thoughtful decision—the noon duty aide should know about a behavior plan, but not grades or attendance. As long as you are releasing what is in the best interest of students, you are fine. We can be hung up on legals. Karen: it also needs to be in 504 plans. Alex: There are not simple answers to some of these questions. The responsibility of this committee is to bring these issues forward. We will take it from here. We will make sure we are clarifying what is concerning all of us. It takes some perseverance and time; we will get answers to all of them. [Mark left.]

**Middle school students are pulled out of science classes** for remedial math and reading but remain in elective classes creating a distinct content and knowledge gap entering 9<sup>th</sup> grade science. – Karen Allen (Adriel Shearer)

Adriel: the last word in the question should be science instead of math. They don't have a full year of science that all their peers have. Adriel thinks Will brought this issue up last year, and now has asked Adriel to follow up. Karen: did Will indicate whether it is any better this year than in the past? Karen has contacted the 3 middle school principals. Meadow Hill has responded: it is seriously on their radar; the same is true of Porter. She did not connect with Washington but will do so for the next meeting. There are a lot of competing responsibilities. Karen would like to clarify that in a middle school an exploratory is not an elective, it is part of the curriculum and it is required. The reaction is they are missing the content and they get to go to the fun class. Adriel: science is not required? Karen: Yes it is. But creative communications is required. It is different from high school. She knows there are kids for whom there is a decision that reading has to come before everything else; how do we deal with any lack of content they had? Maybe we need to have another little thing. She thinks the middle schools are conscious and it is going to get better over time. Alex asked if this is referring to Meadow Hill. Karen: well, Meadow Hill feeds Sentinel more than others; she is not sure how they organized it in the past; they are aware of it and consciously working on it. Will it be perfect?—No. Adriel will take it back to Will. Alex: and if he has other specifics, let us know. Karen: it could be there was a conscious and consistent system in place that said we are taking kids out of science specifically; that may have been in the past, but not now. Crista knows that there were a couple of years at Porter when that was the case but it went away. Karen: Porter is doing push in classes instead of pull out: the resource staff is going into the content class. Adriel asked Crista: you are seeing a flow through of that system; it is shifting back; it will continue to minimize. Alex: do we need more information on this? Karen will keep trying to gather more information; if Will has specific questions, let us know. People are trying to make it better. At the start of RTI there was a lot of doing separate classes; now we are not so much into doing separate classes. Alex: you will look into it, and Will will let us know.

**Help desk tickets:** Weekly reporting to Dept. Chairs – Hatton Littman (Diane Anderson)

Hatton gave a follow-up. There are 2 layers of information: 1- it is certainly technically possible to provide read only access to department chairs; it works at high school and middle school, maybe tech committee. It is feasible but not incredibly convenient; software is a bit antiquated; if there are changes to who the individual was or group of individuals we would have to adjust the contact list manually. Before she puts that into effect, she would like to communicate with building administrators that it would create an extra layer they would have to deal with. The feedback from administrators is by and large 'let's not adjust that right now.' It is not that they don't want to share the information, but they are not seeing that it would get priorities to getting

the issues addressed. Diane: could we run a pilot and see how it works? Hatton: she is working with the district tech committee trying to find if there are ways for tech committees to play a more robust role in buildings than they have in the past, or that have been abandoned. She is not cancelling it out for the future, but she is getting feedback now from buildings that they prefer not to adjust the practice. She is continually aware of where we are.

Alex said he has an agenda item he would like the committee to deal with; he will email it.

**Use of PIR day to make up snow day.** (Adriel Shearer)

Apostle said we will table number 8, use of PIR day to make up snow day.

Apostle asked if the committee wants Hatton to come back for number 7, Help Desk Tickets, or if they are okay. Diane said she sees some flexibility on it for the future; she thinks it is great.

The meeting concluded at 5:02 p.m.

As recording secretary for this meeting, I certify these minutes to be a true and correct copy of what was taken at the meeting.

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Elizabeth Serviss, Minutes Recorder

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Alex P. Apostle, Superintendent